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The Man From Home

A Novelization of the Play of the Same Name

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By **BOOTH TARKINGTON** and **HARRY LEON WILSON**

(Continued.)

"The brigand (tore himself), he read excitedly, 'from the hand of the carabinieri, and without the doubt he concealed himself in some of these grotto near Sorrento, and searchment is being executed. The agent of the Russian embassy have inform' the bureau that this escape one is a most in-fray-mose robber and danger brigand.'

"What name does the paper say he has?" interrupted Mme de Champligny, with a catch of her breath, and Mariano bowed again jerkily in her direction.

"It has not to say, madame," he replied. "That is all. And will you, and Mme. la Comtesse excuse me? And may I take the journal? There is one who should see it."

Hawcastle smiled slightly at his excitement and nodded.

"Very well, Mariano," he said, and Mariano, with another jerk that was supposed to include both of the illustrious ones, disappeared with a speediness that was alarming. For an instant there was silence, and then the countess, with a quick upward glance of her dark eyes, said tremblingly:

"I should like much to know his name."

The earl smiled and went on with his breakfast.

"You may be sure it isn't Ivanoff," he said, but the assurance did not seem to carry weight with madame, for she leaned her chin in her hand and looked off over the bay, and there was a troubled look in her eyes.

CHAPTER V.
THE ENGAGEMENT.

"HOW can one know it is not Ivanoff?" she asked slowly, and this time the earl laughed aloud.

"He wouldn't be called an infamous brigand," he said, but the countess waved her hand.

"That, my friend, may be only Italian journalism," she said.

"Foolish," said Hawcastle. "This means a highwayman—not not an embezzler, Helene."

The countess arose from the table and moved about restlessly with her eyes on the blue expanse.

"I should be glad to believe it, my good friend, but I care for no more to eat. I have perhaps some foolish feeling of unsafety. It is now two nights that I dream of him—of Ivanoff—had dreams for us both, my friend."

The earl looked up in amazement and then burst into a laugh.

"What rot!" he exclaimed. "It takes more than a dream to bring a man back from Siberia."

The countess looked at him with some sharpness.

"Then I pray there has been no more than dreams," she murmured quietly.

Even as she spoke there came the tinkling sound of the mandolins and guitars, and madame turned to the lemon grove in time to see a young girl in a fawn colored riding habit, with a soft felt hat upon her head and a riding crop in her gauntleted hands, enter, followed by three picturesque banditti with the instruments.

As she reached the terrace she paused and drew from her glove some silver which she dropped into the hand of the first villain with a laugh. Then she turned, smiling, as the musicians withdrew and waved her crop at the two who were watching her. The earl arose with a bow, and madame advanced with outstretched hand.

"Ah, the divine Miss Granger-Simpson!" said Newcastle with rallery in his tones, and the girl laughed with a happy, care free face.

"The divinely happy Miss Granger-Simpson," she said, and at the sound of her voice and the look in her eyes the countess ran to her and kissed her rapturously upon each cheek.

"Oh, I hope you mean"—she began, when Hawcastle interrupted her with some excitement.

"You mean you have made my son divinely happy?"

The girl extricated herself laughingly from the embrace of the countess and turned to the earl.

"Is not every one divinely happy at Sorrento," she cried, waving her crop, "even your son?" and with another laugh ran quickly up the steps and into the hotel, leaving the other two looking at each other with astonishment.

As they looked a piano from the music room that opened upon the terrace broke forth with Champligny's "Elevation," and Ethel's voice took up the words clearly. The countess turned to her companion.

"She flies to her piano, mon cher. Ah, that is good for our little enterprise, eh? Listen!"

Hawcastle sat down with a grunt of satisfaction.

"It's time! If Almeric had been anything but a clumsy oaf he'd have made her settle it weeks ago."

The woman turned her dark eyes upon him with a flash.

"You are inviolable, mon ami. My affair is not settled. Am I a clumsy oaf too?"

The earl laughed quietly.

"No, Helene. Your little American is so in love with you that if you asked him suddenly, 'Horace, is this day or night?' he would answer, 'It's Helene.' But he's too shy to speak. You're a woman; you can't press matters. But Almeric's a man; he can. He can urge an immediate marriage, which means an immediate settlement and a direct one."

Mme. de Champligny picked up a silver fork from the table and examined it carefully.

"It will not be small—that matter."



A young girl followed by three picturesque banditti.

ment? You have decided what sum? Hawcastle looked up sharply and nodded with decision.

"I have a hundred and fifty thousand pounds!"

From the countess came a gasp of astonishment.

"My friend! Will she?" And she turned and stared at the room where the piano was still playing. Hawcastle laughed grimly.

"Not for Almeric, but to be the Countess of Hawcastle. My ancient sister-in-law hasn't been her chaperon for a year for nothing. And, by Jove, she hasn't done it for nothing, either!"

And this time he laughed quite heartily as with a grim appreciation of the jest.

"But she's deserved all I shall allow her," he resumed. "You see, it was



"She accepted me."

she who found these people. Indeed, he might say that both you and I owe her something. Even a less capacious respectability than Lady Creech's might have looked askance at the long 'friendship' that has existed between us. Yet she has always countenanced us, my dear, though she must have guessed a great many things. And she will help us to urge an immediate marriage. You know as well as I do that unless it is immediate there'll be the devil to pay. Don't miss that essential. Something must be done at once. We're at the breaking point, if you like the words—a most damnable insolency."

As he finished speaking the immaculate and vacuous Almeric himself strolled into the terrace and, putting up his glass as he came forward, said softly:

"Hello, governor! Howdy, countess?"

"With an affection of boredom he sprawled into a chair and tapped at his boots with his crop."

"Out riding a bit ago, you know, with Miss Granger-Simpson. Ripplin' girl, isn't she?"

His father leaned across the table with tension in every line of him.

"Go on!" he said anxiously, and Almeric looked up at him with a silly smile.

"Didn't stop with her, though?"

"Why not?" demanded the earl angrily.

"A sort of man in the village got me to look at a bull terrier pup," Almeric went on, with a yawn. "Wonderful little beast for points. Jolly luck, isn't it? He has got a head on him!"

Hawcastle interrupted savagely.

"We'll concede his tremendous advantage over you in that respect," he said and threw the cigar he had just lighted into the coffee cup.

"Is that all you have to tell us?" implored the countess, with a dramatic gesture, leaning forward. Almeric looked up with surprise.

"Oh, no!" he said. "She accepted me."

The earl dropped into a chair with a sigh of relief, and the countess clasped her hands ecstatically.

"Endin'! Brava! And will she let it be soon?"

Again Almeric stifled a yawn.

"I dare say there'll be no row about that," he replied. "You see, I've made her awfully happy."

"On my soul, I believe you're right," said Hawcastle, "and thank God you are."

Rising, he walked up and down the terrace and then turned quickly.

"Here's her brother," he said softly. "Attention now!"

CHAPTER VI.

EASY PREY.

USUALLY when a man through inclination or environment decides that the manners of his people will not serve for him and that the customs of the land of his adoption are more applicable to his purpose he extends even the natives in his conformation to the existing modes.

Horace Granger-Simpson—the Granger was but a recent innovation due to the belief that Simpson by itself was altogether too hopelessly plebeian to attract even a modicum of attention—had consorted with the gilded youth of several capitals, and his education had progressed to such an extent that the youth of Kokomo would have stoned him instantly upon his arrival at the town depot.

He ambled with a rocking gait, drawn from the guardsmen he had so carefully watched, down the steps or the hotel on to the terrace, and his attire would have attracted notice from a Hindoo idol. He wore spotlessly white flannels, white shoes pipelayed to a dazzling degree, a thoroughly British straw hat, chamol gloves and a pale blue scarf held together with a massive pearl.

For an instant Mme. la Comtesse looked at him and then, with a little cry of greeting, rushed toward the steps and took both his startled hands.

"Ah, my dear Horace Granger-Simpson!" she said excitedly. "Has your sister told you?"

Horace swallowed once or twice savagely and then made a heroic effort to keep down the radiance that was choking him, made two effectual dabs at his eyes with the handkerchief he took from his sleeve and responded joyfully, though brokenly:

"She has, indeed. I assure you I am quite overcome, my dear friends. Really, I assure you."

With a silvery laugh Mme. de Champligny stepped backward from him, making a little courtesy as she did so. The earl came forward with outstretched hands and grasped one of Horace's between both his own.

"My dear young friend," he said. "Not at all—not at all."

As the remark seemed a trifle ambiguous, Horace looked at him inquiringly, but, reading reassurance in his face, replied instantly:

"I assure you I am. I assure you I am. It's quite overpowering, isn't it?"

With a look of commiseration the countess regarded him and said softly:

"Ah, poor M. Horace!"

From his sprawled attitude in the chair the honorable Almeric drew a protest.

"I say! Don't take it that way, you know. She's very happy."

Horace recovered himself instantly and crossed the terrace quickly to grasp the hand of the bridegroom to be. The fact that it was as limp as a mackerel did not worry him an instant.

"She's worthy of it—she's worthy of it! I know she is! And when will it be, Sir Almeric?" he said.

"Enchanting!" cried the countess enthusiastically. "So clear is his grasp of the case, eh?"

Hawcastle flashed her a glance and turned to Horace.

"Oh, the date?" he said doubtfully.

"I dare say within a year—two years—"

"There was another little cry of protest from the countess, and the earl glared at her menacingly. Horace started, too, and seemed to be about to enter a positive objection, but he contented himself with saying:

"Oh, but I say, you know, isn't that putting it jolly far off? The thing's settled, isn't it? Why not say a month instead of a year?"

"Ha-hum!" said the earl. "Oh, if you like! I don't know that there is any real objection."

"I do, indeed," returned Horace. "See here! Why not let them marry here in Italy?"

Hawcastle could scarcely conceal his satisfaction, while Mme. de Champligny executed a bit of a pas seul behind Horace's back.

"Ah, the dashing methods of you Americans!" returned the earl smilingly. "You carry things on so! Next you'll be saying, 'Why not here at Sorrento?'"

"Well, and why not, indeed?" asked Horace instantly.

"And then," went on Hawcastle, smiling, "and then it will be, 'Why not within a fortnight?'"

"Right-o!" cried Horace. "And why not within a fortnight?"

Almeric sat up and stared at his noble father and brother-in-law to be, but the earl smiled once more that cheerful smile and waved a deprecating hand.

"Ah, you wonderful people! You are whirlwinds, yet I see no reason why it should not be in a fortnight."

"Oh, here! I say, you know?" interjected Almeric, heaving himself erect in the chair and waving a protesting crop. The earl turned on him instantly.

"As I say, dear boy, why not?" he inquired suavely, and Almeric wilted immediately.

"Just as you say, governor," he answered meekly.

"Enchanting! Brava!" cried the countess, and Hawcastle again turned to the palpitating Horace.

"My son is all impatience," he murmured, fixing the young man with his eye.

"Quite so, quite so," answered Almeric dazedly, and his father went on: "Shall we dispose of the necessary little details at once—the various minor arrangements, the—er—settlement?" and interrupted himself with a friendly laugh and patted Horace upon the back. "Of course as men of the world—our world—you understand there are formalities in the nature of a settlement."

Horace, who was in the seventh heaven of delight at the approaching alliance between one of the ancient houses of Kokomo, Ind., and the honorable line of Hawcastle, broke in eagerly:

"Quite so, of course! I know! Certainly! Perfectly!"

"Then we'll have no difficulty about that, my boy. I'll wire my solicitor tonight and he'll be here within two days," said the earl carelessly. "If you wish to consult your own solicitor you can cable him, of course."

Suddenly Horace seemed taken with a fit of embarrassment.

"The fact is, Lord Hawcastle," he said, "I've a notion that our solicitor—Ethel's man of business, that is—from Kokomo, Ind., where our governor lived—in fact, a sort of guardian of hers—may be here at any time. I've heard from friends that he is coming in this direction."

The word had caught Hawcastle's attention, and he leaped at it.

"A sort of guardian? What sort, eh?" he inquired, seemingly taken aback.

(To be Continued.)

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